



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PRINCIPLES AND STRATEGIES

Our outreach activities gave us valuable insight into how the public perceives its role in transportation planning and programming.

People want to provide meaningful input into California's transportation planning and programming process. However, many find transportation planning and programming confusing, and they do not understand how and when to get engaged. Some also expressed skepticism as to whether their input would really make a difference. In response to this input, we have developed the following principles to guide our public engagement efforts:

- Clarify the transportation planning and programming processes.
- Show the impact and relevance of transportation issues to the public.
- Explain how and when the public can influence State, regional, and local transportation policies and projects.
- Reach a broad spectrum of California's diverse population.

- Evaluate continually the effectiveness of the public participation process.

The following general strategies will build on these principles to ensure a comprehensive, meaningful, and responsive public participation process.

Generate Interest Through Connections

To generate interest in the CTP and FSTIP, public outreach activities must demonstrate how these documents are relevant to people's daily lives. Often when the public is invited to comment on transportation plans and programs, the complexity and volume of materials discourages them from further investigation—bureaucratic documentation creates a sense of detachment that is difficult to overcome. Clearly showing how transportation relates to quality of life issues can help the public make connections to the CTP and the FSTIP. For example, a CTP newsletter could feature an article on transportation's effects on public health.



Get Involved Early!

Early and continuous involvement means your input will have greater influence on transportation decision making.

What the Public Wants To Know:

- What is the CTP or the FSTIP? Why are these documents important to the State, to the region, to the city, to me?
- What is in the document? How is it organized? How can I find out about a particular project or what is being planned for my area?
- How does the CTP or the FSTIP fit in with local and regional plans and programs? Isn't it too late for my input at the statewide level?
- How do these projects get paid for?
- What type of input does Caltrans want from me, and by when? Do I have the ability to change the details of a project that is in the FSTIP?
- Why is commenting on this CTP or FSTIP worth my time?
- How will Caltrans address my comments?

Visualization Techniques

- Process graphics or wallgraphics
- Maps
- Flowcharts
- Photo simulations
- Audience response systems (clicker technology)
- Interactive displays
- Artist renderings and drawings
- Scenario planning



Simplify Educational Materials and Utilize Visualization Techniques

We can increase public interest in the CTP and the FSTIP if we clarify the transportation planning and programming processes. To make these complicated procedures more accessible, we will develop educational materials that simplify transportation planning and programming and answer questions such as those shown in the sidebar. Those wanting more in-depth explanations of these activities will be directed to more detailed reference documents.

Another way to help the public understand transportation planning and programming is to incorporate visualization techniques whenever possible, both on the web and in printed materials. Visuals such as charts, graphs, drawings, photos, and process graphics often convey technical information, complex ideas or concepts more effectively than a narrative format. The sidebar includes some of the visualization techniques we plan to use during public outreach. Appendix B shows a visual example of one of these techniques—a wallgraphic created during a typical community planning session.

Be Transparent

The public should be able to access transportation planning and programming documents easily, find out about public involvement opportunities, and know that their comments are acknowledged. Because public involvement for the CTP and the FSTIP covers the entire State, the Internet offers the most practical communication method. The public confirmed this assumption during our outreach activities, as when they told us that they prefer web communication to all other methods. Therefore, a comprehensive web portal will provide the focus for our public participation efforts. The web portal will include the following features:

- User-friendly and attractive interface
- Clear information about state-wide, regional, and local transportation planning and programming
- Fact sheets, online newsletters and/or a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page
- A calendar and schedule of public outreach activities
- Timelines and “next steps” outlining the planning process
- Links to other planning and programming documents of interest to the public
- Public comment forms (with

immediate acknowledgment of receipt and timely response)

- Signup forms for further information and updates via email or webfeed
- Contact names and phone numbers
- A format that can be linked to software for the visually impaired
- Availability of alternative formats (e.g., a printed and mailed version of the website material)
- Continual updating

Use Diverse Outreach Tools

While a comprehensive and dynamic online presence will be the focal point of our public participation efforts, we recognize that to reach a broad spectrum of the public we must employ a wide range of outreach techniques. The sidebar lists some of the many tools that we will use to engage the public. In addition to these tools, on an as-needed basis we also will provide language assistance to participants whose first language is other than English, provide documents in alternate formats to those with sensory disabilities, and provide disability assistance at workshops. We will also strive to make workshops and focus groups as open to as many people as possible by choosing easily accessible locations and accommodating nontraditional work schedules.



Where to find us!

For the latest on the CTP and the FSTIP go to our websites at:

<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpo/offices/osp/ctp.html>
and <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/transprog/fedpgrm.htm>



Public Outreach Toolbox

- Dynamic website
- Email blasts
- Focus groups
- Regional workshops
- Stakeholder and community group presentations
- Connecting with trusted community leaders
- Mainstream and ethnic media outreach
- Newsletters
- Surveys



Get Connected!

Chances are there are other people that share your transportation concerns. To increase the impact of your input, join up with a community or advocacy group that represents your interests.



Interested Parties Under Federal Regulations

- Citizens
- Affected public agencies
- Representatives of public transportation employees
- Freight shippers
- Private providers of transportation
- Representatives of users of public transportation
- Representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities
- Representatives of the disabled
- Providers of freight transportation services

Appendix D includes a more detailed description of the potential outreach methods we will use during CTP and FSTIP public participation efforts.

Engage the Traditionally Underserved

Limited transportation access, childcare necessities, work schedules, and language barriers are just some of the hurdles that keep traditionally underserved populations from attending workshops and focus groups. We plan to provide meaningful public involvement opportunities to minority and low-income populations. Effective strategies aimed at minority and low-income communities include actively engaging members at community gathering places, advertising in ethnic media, providing outreach materials at transit facilities, and communicating through trusted community leaders. In all cases we must clearly show how the CTP and FSTIP are relevant to minorities and low-income populations.

Another approach toward reaching traditionally underserved groups is to build upon existing Caltrans outreach efforts. For example, the Environmental Justice: Context-Sensitive Planning grants program promotes the direct involvement of

low-income, minority, and Native American communities. Many of these groups have websites, email lists, and meetings that could be used to solicit input on the CTP or FSTIP.

Engage Specific Stakeholder Groups

An essential component of the public participation process is the active engagement of stakeholder groups. Members of environmental associations, business alliances, community organizations and other groups often have a considerable investment in transportation issues and can offer valuable feedback in the planning process. Appendix E provides a matrix with recommended outreach methods, special considerations, and topics of high interest particular to specific stakeholder categories. This matrix includes recommended strategies for the “category” of interested party (see sidebar) called out in the federal regulations found in Appendix A. For example, in our research for this plan, freight shippers told us that one of their main concerns was better education for the public on freight issues. A recommended strategy for engaging freight shippers is to give briefings to their statewide and regional groups. These briefings will be tailored to address their specific concerns, such as how freight

issues will be addressed in the CTP.

Respond to Public Comments and Provide Accountability

The public wants to know what impact their input will have and how it will be addressed. We are committed to reviewing and providing appropriate follow-up responses to every comment we receive. Responses will vary depending upon the nature of the response and the type of comments solicited. We have outlined the following protocol for sorting and responding to user comments:

- **Specific comments on the CTP or FSTIP will be addressed either individually or as part of a more general response.** As an example, in the development of the current CTP, a recurring comment was “provide more transportation choices.” This comment heavily influenced the formation of the goals and selection of strategies included in the approved plan. A newsletter article highlighted the effect that this comment had on the plan in order to demonstrate to the public the practical impact of their input.
- **Questions or comments that do not apply to the CTP or FSTIP will be directed to the proper Caltrans contact.** For example, during past outreach for the CTP, Caltrans staff received questions

about the need for, or the status of, a specific transportation project. These kinds of questions will be referred to the Caltrans district serving that area.

- **In some cases, a comment may be appropriate to the CTP or FSTIP but fall outside the scope of the current update.** In such cases, the issue will be acknowledged, documented and addressed in a future plan or program.
- **All comments received during outreach activities will be available for viewing on the CTP and FSTIP websites.**

Comments we received on the draft of this PPP and how they were addressed are included in Appendix C.

Evaluate and Update the Public Participation Plan on a Regular Basis

Caltrans is committed to a continuous review of comments received and an ongoing evaluation of the CTP/FSTIP Public Participation Plan and the public involvement process. We anticipate updating the process every three to five years or as appropriate, and we will gauge the effectiveness of public outreach activities by asking the public to fill out an evaluation at the conclusion of each event. The evaluation will include questions similar to the ones below:



- Did you have an opportunity to participate?
- Did you have a voice in the planning and programming efforts?
- Did you understand the issues?
- Did you feel that Caltrans was responsive to your comments?
- Were you satisfied with the results of the event?

Feedback from individual outreach activities will input future development of the PPP.